
ABRAHAM LINCOLN

(THE BELOVED AND AFFECTIONATE FATHER)

A Sermon delivered in the Baptist Church,
Oshkosh, Wis., April 19, 1865

— BY —

REV. W. W. WHITCOMBE

Request of Committee April 20, 1865. Printed in the
Oshkosh Northwestern April 21, 1865

Published with authority of Author, by

JOHN E. BURTON

in Milwaukee, Wis., August 5, 1907

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THE FOWLE PRINTING CO.
MILWAUKEE

For the Oshkosh Northwestern.

ON THE DEATH OF LINCOLN

Stay Spring, hold back your pleasing task,
Let not the lily bloom,
Nor let the rose in sunshine bask:
The clouds o'erspread in gloom.
Your songsters of the woodland hush,
Or tell them to deplore
With mournful song, in every bush,
Our Lincoln is no more.

Chain down the winds, scarce let them blow.
To stir the newborn leaf;
Tell all the streamlets as they flow,
To murmur forth our grief,
Calm down Lake Winnebago's breast,
As it nears the pebbly shore;
And as each wave returns to rest,
Moan Lincoln is no more!

Proud man, see Nature sympathize
In this our Country's grief;—
Humble your heart and raise your eyes
Toward Heaven for relief.
Bow down your head and ask God's grace,
And fervently implore
That he would grant our Country peace,—
Our Lincoln is no more.

B. R.

Explanatory Correspondence

MILWAUKEE, WIS., U. S. A., April 4, 1907.

Mr. C. D. Elliott, Lincoln, Nebraska.

MY DEAR SIR: To yours of March 28, 1907, regarding the Lincoln Eulogy or Sermon, will say that I infer from your letter that Rev. W. W. Whitcombe is still living and is your father-in-law, and that your wife sends the sermon in the form it appeared at the date it was published in the *Northwestern of Oshkosh* in April, 1865.

Anyway I will make your wife a proposal. Give me full written authority to publish the sermon in usual pamphlet form, and I will have it put up nicely and bound in paper covers in a limited edition and give her as many copies as she may need in consideration of the property. This preserves the sermon appropriately as it deserves, as it carries the old-time ring of the Lincoln days and possesses true literary merit and patriotic integrity.

Sincerely yours,

A large, elegant handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John C. Burton". The signature is written in dark ink and features a prominent, sweeping underline that extends across the width of the name.

408 Milwaukee Street.

Mr. John E. Burton, Milwaukee, Wis.

MY DEAR SIR: Pray accept my appreciation of your kind offer to preserve my father's Address on the death of Lincoln, in the form you suggested.

You have my heartiest permission to publish it in pamphlet form, and all that I ask is a half dozen copies of the same, according to your generous tender.

My father, a retired Baptist clergyman, is incapacitated by reason of paralysis to hold communication with his friends in writing, else he would have written you personally.

Believe me, sir,

Very courteously yours,

PERLIE MAE WHITCOMBE.

(Mrs. C. D. Elliott.)

LINCOLN, Neb., July 20, 1907.

EULOGY ON THE DEATH

—OF—

PRESIDENT LINCOLN,

**Delivered at Oshkosh, Wis., April 19, 1865, by Rev.
W. W. Whitcombe, Pastor of the
Baptist Church.**

CORRESPONDENCE.

REV'D W. W. WHITCOMBE:

DEAR SIR: The Committee on Ceremonies at the stand, respectfully request a copy of the eulogy delivered by you, on yesterday, for publication.

H. C. JEWELL,

Chairman Committee.

OSHKOSH, April 20, 1865.

H. C. JEWELL:

DEAR SIR: Having had but a few hours in which to prepare the eulogy referred to, it is necessarily quite incomplete. I will, however, under the circumstances, though reluctantly, comply with your courteous request.

Very truly yours,

W. W. WHITCOMBE.

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EULOGY

ON THE

DEATH OF LINCOLN

When, by the hand of Providence, some idol of the heart is suddenly torn away, and life seems robbed of its holiest charm, the tongue is powerless to express the anguish that rends the soul. As silent witness of the wonderous doings of the Divine Hand, we can only breathe the impressive words of the great Massillon, when he pronounced his funeral oration over the body of Louis the Fourteenth,—“*God only is Great,*” Or, perchance, with Israel’s bard, our hearts respond, “I was dumb—I opened not my mouth; for Thou didst it.” Thus chastened in spirit we reverently observe the present appointment; for we are all mourners to-day. The melancholy intelligence recently flashed over our land, has filled the hearts of millions with unspeakable anguish. The sorrowful event which many had tremblingly anticipated, has at length transpired. Our beloved President has fallen. A nation just now thrilled with exultant joy by the signal victories of its gallant army, is now suddenly brought to silence and profoundest grief. Just as the heavens began to shim-

mer with the light of returning peace, thick darkness quickly veils the skies, and here we are to-day in gloom and in tears. Like children bewailing the departure of a beloved and affectionate father, we have come to honor the memory of the illustrious dead. But while upon every countenance I seem to behold the very impersonation of sorrow, it is befitting that we should control as far as we may the emotions that sway the soul, and thoughtfully regard the impressive lessons which this calamity is fitted to impart.

Mine is no ordinary task to-day to speak of one whose name has long since been enshrined in every loyal heart. A tribute more eloquent than words has already been paid to the memory of our lamented President. The nation's highest eulogy are its tears! Often and importunately had we prayed God to preserve his life, believing the destiny of our imperiled country and the hopes of the world, were committed to his hands. While the blood-thirsty minions of Treason were vigorously plying their engines of destruction, we felt that Heaven had given us a calm, honest, resolute, trustworthy leader.

We did not fear betrayal. And since so much depended on the moral heroism and in-

tegrity of the President, we invoked for him that wisdom, courage and protection which the Infinite One could alone vouchsafe. For more than four years of sorrow and sternest trial, God mercifully heard those prayers. Though shocked by this horrible work of the traitorous assassin, yet we may wonder that this same wicked purpose had not long since been consummated. How industriously did black-hearted treason seek his life when first called to the Presidential chair; and, as recent developments have shown, on the occasion of his second installment in office, grim-visaged murder again sought his blood. Villainous traitors watched him daily at the Capitol as he quietly, earnestly, fearlessly prosecuted his Heaven-appointed mission, but, shielded thus far, like our own beloved Washington, by an invisible sentry from the skies, he was permitted undisturbed to act his part in the sad drama—*then God took him*. But while we mourn for one whom all true patriots had learned to love and revere, we ought to thank God that he was so long spared, to accomplish so much towards the destruction of slavery and the recovery of our land from the bloody grasp of treason. We dare not say his death was premature. Though we weep, let us not quarrel with Providence. His work is

done. The Angel of history has now penned the last sentence of that noble life; the book is closed, veiled in mystery, and we must wait till eternity's light shall make the record plain. Few are called to a more conspicuous part in the sternly sublime scenes of human life. When mighty revolutions are to transpire, we see that God raises up his own agents; and fitted by nature and education to do the appointed work. Moses fulfilled under the divine direction what no other leader could have accomplished; Aristides was the savior of ancient Greece; Charlemagne, the regenerator of Western Europe; Washington, the father of his country; President Lincoln, the preserver of that country; the champion of liberty; the vindicator of right and justice to all men. He was one of the few great representative men of the age. He was, indeed, a profound mathematician politically, slowly but accurately solving the knotty problems of the day. And thus by persistent toil and unwavering devotion to truth and right he built his "doom of renown!" And, though his bodily presence is taken from us, does he not still live? Will not his name become immortal because embalmed in the affections of a grateful, though sorrowing, people? Truly, a more thrilling tragedy the world never saw. Trace the clos-

ing scene. See with what inflexible faith in God he grasps the pillars of that mighty temple of Diana whose abominations had made us the reproach of the civilized world, and dies beneath its tumbling ruins!

My audience, there is a moral sublimity attaching to the entire course of our departed President, which we shall all appreciate more fully by and by. Perhaps we are too much shocked, just now, by the fiendish blood-thirstiness characterizing his assassination, to view all things in their proper light to-day. But we do know that as God's appointed agent, he burst open the bolted doors of American slavery, welcomed four millions of his hitherto down-trodden fellow countrymen to the enjoyment of Heaven's free air, while in the very act, he himself fell a victim to the same murderous spirit which has already shed the blood of a million men. The heart can *feel*, tho' the tongue may not *express* our grateful appreciation of those valuable labors thus abruptly terminated.

Perilous but sublime was the mission of our lamented President. Honestly, fearlessly, did he discharge the duties belonging to his high station. Having finished the work which Providence gave him to do, he yields up his own

life to be added to the common sacrifice for Truth, Freedom, Humanity, God. May his mantle fall upon his successor, that our country may yet live, and by the supremacy of liberty, truth and right become the joy and praise of the whole earth. Along with the thousands of our fathers, brothers, and sons who have bravely fallen in the defence of our glorious republic, our beloved and honored President now lies sleeping in a patient martyr's grave. Thus we see that slavery, like a condemned criminal about to be hung, madly plunges the steel into the heart of the executioner as it swings down from the fatal platform. Well, if President Lincoln's life helped to kill slavery, his *death* will ensure its burial beyond the possibility of resurrection. But it were impossible to recount all the virtues and public services of our lamented Chief to-day.

Permit me, then, in conclusion, to refer to the most attractive feature in his character. That trait is all revealed in those memorable words of his, "I do love Jesus." It will ever impart the sweetest consolation to remember him not only as a sound statesman and wise ruler, but also as a humble, trusting disciple of the meek and lowly Savior. May this crushing

sorrow only lead us to sober reflections, causing us more and more to confide in the Lord of Hosts, whose arm alone can give us sure and permanent victory.

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